

**Biosecurity Australia (BA)**  
**Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS)**  
**(Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry)**  
**&**  
**Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)**  
**(United States Department of Agriculture)**

**2004 Technical Plant Quarantine Meeting**

**Minutes**

**1. Meeting Opening**

**1.1 Welcome and opening remarks**

Meeting opened 9am 21 January 2004.

BA officially welcomed APHIS delegates.

Opening remarks highlighted the good relationship between Australia and the US, and the progress made over the last year on several bilateral issues.

**1.2 Confirmation of the agenda**

Agenda was confirmed without modification.

**1.3 Action Follow up from the 2002 and 2003 meetings**

Attendees from both parties worked through the action item list and agreed on those items to be removed and retained.

**2. Collaborative Issues**

**2.1 Irradiation as a phytosanitary measure**

**General discussion**

BA gave APHIS a brief on the current state of this issue in Australia. APHIS advised BA that a generic irradiation dose for a range of arthropods is currently in the rule making stage of the Federal Register. APHIS further advised that the US is looking into generic dose rate issues and the use of irradiation against lepidopteran and mite pests. APHIS agreed to pass on background data for recommended treatment dosages for various arthropod pests. BA informed APHIS of a recent review of irradiation efficacy data by Cochrane and Waddel.

**ACTION** – BA to forward to APHIS the Corcoran & Waddel paper on a review of irradiation efficacy data.

AQIS enquired as to the existence of a work plan for irradiated papaya from Hawaii to Chicago.

**ACTION** – APHIS to forward procedures for irradiated papayas from Hawaii to AQIS.

**Bilateral MOU**

Attendees discussed the possibility of a tripartite framework agreement on irradiation (to include Australia, New Zealand and the US). In principle both the US and Australia were in favour. APHIS is to raise the issue with New Zealand during an upcoming bilateral meeting. APHIS advised BA that they would convene a symposium on irradiation with US industry and submit to them a draft NAPPO framework agreement on irradiation. APHIS proposed to share this draft with Australia and New Zealand as a basis to progress a tri-partite agreement.

**ACTION** – APHIS and BA to commence work on a tripartite framework agreement on irradiation (with New Zealand). APHIS is to provide a draft to BA as soon as possible.

(The CEO of Surebeam Biosecurity Corporation, made a presentation to the attendees on local developments with regards to irradiation as a phytosanitary measure)

## 2.2 **Fruit flies**

BA briefed APHIS on the current fruit fly situation in Australia, noting potential changes to the current Codes of Practice for the management of Queensland and Mediterranean fruit flies. Proposed moves to reduce the sizes of suspension zones following the detection of fruit flies within fruit fly free zones were discussed. APHIS reported that there is in principle agreement within the US on the advantages of reducing suspension zones but some questions remain, and that NAPPO is looking to develop a regional standard. APHIS raised the possibility of the relevant Australian and US experts meeting. BA welcomed the opportunity for the development of a multilateral approach on the issue and proposed that a group be developed to progress the development of regional and international standards. APHIS was in agreement with the BA position and further proposed that the relevant Australian and US experts meet to consult on the research in preparation for further development of policy in this area.

**ACTION** – BA to coordinate a meeting of prospective Australian and US experts within the next 6 months in order to review the research and begin the process of developing a common approach to fruit fly suspension zones and quarantine triggers.

## 2.3 **Export Certification Issues**

### **Electronic certification**

AQIS briefed APHIS on the state of development of electronic phytosanitary export certification in Australia.

APHIS stated that the US is also committed to paperless trading.

APHIS and BA were in agreement that each of the four quadrilateral partners were progressing independently on electronic certification systems. There is a need for an executive decision at the upcoming quadrilateral meeting between Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the US to develop programs that will allow the four countries to send and access selected electronic certificates to each other and determine the logistics and mechanics of implementation.

### **Notification procedures**

APHIS briefed BA/AQIS on US concerns regarding notification of changes to the ICON database and difficulties APHIS is experiencing in correctly advising US exporters of Australian import requirements given inconsistencies in ICON and the rapid pace of change of the database. APHIS also requested clarification of which requirements are notified to the WTO and as to how the US will be notified of any relevant changes in Australian import requirements.

BA responded by advising APHIS that the WTO is notified when Australia commences draft import risk analyses, while policy changes are notified through Plant Biosecurity Policy Memoranda (PBPM). AQIS advised APHIS that Notification Alerts on ICON are employed to advise users of changes to the database. APHIS requested a 'benchmark' version of ICON for US reference to which changes could be made as they are notified.

AQIS replied that such does not exist but that feedback on ICON is welcome. AQIS proposed as an interim measure that APHIS list current problems with ICON and Australia will then undertake to resolve these problems.

**ACTION** – APHIS to provide AQIS/BA with a list of key current questions regarding ICON for resolution without being referred back to ICON.

**ACTION** – AQIS/BA to respond to the provided list as soon as is feasible.

### **Phytosanitary certification for processed goods**

AQIS briefed APHIS on its concerns regarding the refusal of APHIS on several occasions to issue phytosanitary certificates, or any alternate government documentation, that verifies the pest freedom/treatment of semi-processed and processed plant products that potentially may provide a pathway into Australia of pests of quarantine concern. AQIS requested APHIS assistance in resolving this issue.

APHIS acknowledged that the issue has arisen as a consequence of a systemic difference in approach between AQIS and APHIS. APHIS indicated that it was amenable to undertaking a process that would verify that a processor was employing a process that addressed Australian phytosanitary concerns.

**ACTION** – AQIS to send a letter to APHIS outlining Australian concerns, and upon receipt APHIS to act accordingly.

**2.4 Solid wood packaging issues**

APHIS wished to ascertain the Australian position with regards to the implementation of ISPM 15.

AQIS advised that Australia plans to maintain the existing inspection system alongside the requirements outlined in ISPM 15 and that AQIS will be conducting a phased implementation process. AQIS is experiencing some difficulties in implementation and in the interim wood packaging imports into Australia will continue to need to meet the more rigorous existing import requirements.

BA stated that it is possible that ISPM 15 measures will be insufficient for Australia's ALOP but assured APHIS that for any requirements above ISPM 15 Australia will provide due justification and notification.

APHIS advised AQIS that currently the US does not plan to accept phytosanitary certification of treatments of sawn wood packing as an interim measure in lieu of an official mark. APHIS further advised that the US is planning to implement ISPM 15, 1 year from publication of a final rule that APHIS expects to publish mid 2004. However, the three NAPPO members have committed to implement the standard in unison and this may result in some delays to this timing.

**3. US Issues**

**3.1 Californian table grapes**

AQIS provided a report to APHIS on the last season of trade as requested.

Upon consideration of the report, APHIS sought and received clarification on several points and attendees discussed AQIS inspector comments on the work plan. AQIS agreed to provide APHIS with comparative data on interceptions between the 2003 and 2002 seasons of trade.

APHIS requested that BA consider liberalisation of the containment regime for on arrival fumigation based on data from the last season of trade. BA questioned the need for a review of the protocol given that there have been no on arrival fumigations to date and that it was previously agreed that a review would only take place after sufficient trade had occurred to justify a review. BA and APHIS agreed to review this issue prior to the 2005 export season.

**ACTION** – AQIS to provide APHIS with data comparing the number and nature of interceptions between the 2003 and 2002 seasons of trade.

**ACTION** – AQIS to provide APHIS with a final version of the 2003 season report.

**3.2 Californian citrus**

APHIS advised BA of US industry concerns regarding the costs of implementing aspects of the pilot pre-clearance work plan.

BA raised Australian concerns over the high level of pest interceptions (especially Bean Thrips) and sought APHIS assistance in addressing this problem. BA also reported that a high number of fumigations on shipments in the previous year were a consequence of the detection of mites, with importers opting for immediate fumigation rather than waiting for identification. APHIS proposed that US authorities survey the mites on citrus in California to identify if they are already present in Australia and therefore not of quarantine concern.

**ACTION** – APHIS is to investigate the possibility of surveying mites on citrus in California, and if undertaken, to provide a list to BA.

**ACTION** – APHIS to review the pilot pre-clearance program for any changes and provide a final version to BA.

**ACTION** – BA to provide APHIS with a summary of the history of pest interceptions (season by season) on Californian citrus over the last three years.

**3.3 US stone fruits IRA**

BA reiterated that this IRA has been accorded priority and will commence by mid 2004.

**ACTION** – BA to commence IRA for US Stone Fruits from California and the Northwest by 1 July 2004.

**3.4 US Cherries**

APHIS made an official market access request for US cherries into Western Australia. BA advised that the request would probably be handled as an extension of current policy and is unlikely to be completed by commencement of the next season. BA agreed to consult with the Western Australia Quarantine and Inspection Service about the steps to be taken and timing of access to Western Australia for US cherries. APHIS sought clarification on rejected shipments and BA advised of Australia's concerns regarding the high levels of plant debris found during AQIS inspections. APHIS questioned the legitimacy of shipments being held up for plant debris after fumigation. BA replied that all the relevant risk mitigation measures were assessed solely on the importation of cherry fruit and that BA had no data on potential leaf borne pests and diseases and could not conclude that fumigation mitigated any risk thus posed. BA reiterated that Australia has a zero tolerance for plant debris in shipments.

AQIS provided APHIS with a letter in response to a APHIS letter received on 9 January 2004 concerning shipment rejection, alternative measures for mislabelled or unlabelled cartons and procedures to gain market access to Western Australia. AQIS agreed in principle to the APHIS request for only boxes with missing stamps to be fumigated on arrival instead of entire shipments where shipments are received with some boxes missing stamps.

AQIS confirmed that they will accept state and country documents not certified by APHIS attesting to treatments, and agreed to accept government to government faxes where missing paperwork is an issue and to provide an AQIS contact for this purpose. BA advised that AQIS pathologists have detected a powdery mildew fungus potentially different from that in Australia on the peduncles of some imported cherries. This may be an issue in the future.

**ACTION** – BA to compare its current pest data for US cherries with that for Western Australia and then to advise APHIS of the likely timeframe for progression of the market access request for US cherries into Western Australia and any additional information required.

**ACTION** – AQIS to provide APHIS with a contact for the purposes of government-to-government faxes in instances where missing paperwork is an issue.

**ACTION** – BA to consult with Western Australia about the steps to be taken and timing of access for U.S. cherries to Western Australia.

**3.5 US Apples**

BA advised that the US market access request for apples into Australia might be progressed as a policy extension. Work on this market access request has not commenced yet.

APHIS provided BA with a revised pest list for US apples.

**3.6 Florida citrus**

BA reported that the final IRA is nearing completion and briefed APHIS on changes from the draft IRA. APHIS requested a copy of the final with changes highlighted once it is publicly released.

APHIS requested that short-term cold treatment for Caribbean fruit fly be included as a phytosanitary measure. BA agreed to this inclusion subject to review of the efficacy data.

BA clarified that orchard control for post-bloom fruit drop, using the PFD – Fungicide Applications Decisions System, is to form part of the IRA risk management requirements. APHIS requested details of this in writing.

**ACTION** – BA to provide APHIS with a copy of the final IRA with changes from the draft highlighted following release of the document.

**ACTION** – BA to reconsider short-term cold treatment for Caribbean fruit fly as proposed by APHIS.

**ACTION** – BA to provide APHIS with a letter detailing mitigation measures for post-bloom fruit drop as soon as feasible.

**3.7 Bulk maize for stockfeed**

APHIS passed on US requests for information regarding the details of CSIRO research on potential grain devitalisation treatments given US industry concerns over the cost of meeting the conditions as set out in the final IRA. BA advised that the initial results from CSIRO research investigating these treatments were inconclusive, but will consider research from other sources. APHIS asked for a contact in CSIRO to pursue details of the research findings.

**ACTION** – BA to provide APHIS with a contact at CSIRO with regards to grain devitalisation research.

**3.8 US raspberries**

APHIS made a formal market access request for Californian raspberries into Australia. BA advised that it is considering the commencement a ‘global’ berry IRA, which would therefore include US raspberries.

**ACTION** – BA to formally respond to market access request and inform APHIS if the request is to form part of a ‘global’ berry IRA and on probable timing.

**3.9 Idaho sweet corn seed**

APHIS sought clarification on some issues in order to assist US export certification specialists.

**ACTION** – APHIS to provide a letter to BA outlining issues requiring clarification.

**3.10 Papaya**

BA confirmed that it would issue a PBPM that accepts irradiation as a phytosanitary measure for papaya from Hawaii. BA advised APHIS that any GM papaya will require a licence from the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator and a separate assessment by Food Standards Australia New Zealand. APHIS requested information on how to commence this process. APHIS were advised that any irradiated and/or GM papaya will have to be labelled as such.

**ACTION** – BA/AQIS to determine appropriate irradiation dose rates for papaya from Hawaii.

**ACTION** – BA to release PBPM that accepts irradiation of papaya from Hawaii.

**ACTION** - AQIS/BA to update ICON to reflect acceptance of irradiation of papaya from Hawaii.

**ACTION** - BA to provide contact details for APHIS to investigate the requirements for commencing FSANZ and OTGR assessments of GM papaya for human consumption.

#### 4. Australian Issues

##### 4.1 Australian Cherries to US

APHIS advised BA that writing of a final rule permitting imports is due to commence. Cold treatment for fruit fly and inspection and sampling for light brown apple moth are being considered as risk mitigation measures. Irradiation would be a potential treatment option for fruit fly. APHIS further advised that data provided by BA on the efficacy of Methyl Bromide (MBR) fumigation against the pests of concern has been submitted to CPHST for consideration and that APHIS will consider MBR fumigation as a treatment option following this review. BA clarified that it is seeking cold treatment/inspection, fumigation and fruit fly area freedom as alternate risk mitigation measures and further canvassed the possibility of irradiation as a future measure. APHIS advised that consideration of these issues could delay publication of the final rule. BA reiterated the priority of this issue for Australia.

**ACTION** – APHIS to advise BA if the inclusion of MBR fumigation, fruit fly area freedom and irradiation as risk mitigation measures will impede the drafting of the final rule. Subsequently, BA to advise if these measure should be considered.

##### 4.2 Mangoes

BA thanked APHIS for the completed PRA.

**ACTION** – BA to respond to APHIS with any comments on PRA and options for mitigation measures.

##### 4.3 Tropical fruits

BA advised that they have not yet consulted with industry but anticipate that the order of priority within this category to be lychee, custard apple, rambutan, longan and mangosteen.

**ACTION** – BA to consult with HMAc in the first week of March and subsequently formally notify APHIS of Australian industry priorities.

##### 4.4 Citrus from low risk areas (Emerald/Narromine and Bourke)

BA asked APHIS to consider the Emerald market access submission and provide feedback. BA advised that the survey data required for completion of the Narromine and Bourke submission is due by March/April 2004. BA will then finalise the submission and provide this to APHIS. BA requested clarification from APHIS on information they require to define or determine low pest prevalence for fruit flies. APHIS indicated that cold treatment will be mandatory regardless of low pest prevalence and undertook to clarify their information needs in this regard.

**ACTION** – APHIS to clarify low pest prevalence with respect to fruit flies for the Emerald/Narromine and Bourke market access submissions and to advise BA.

##### 4.5 Avocados

APHIS stated that the avocado PRA will be progressed following those for the tropical fruits.

##### 4.6 Cotton seed

APHIS advised that while the PRA is close to completion, APHIS has a report from Centre for Plant Health Science and Technology that the Australian strains of *Fusarium* of concern to the US do demonstrate increased pathogenicity and that this may be a future issue.

**ACTION** – APHIS to provide PRA to BA once completed.

#### 5. Other Business

#### 6. Follow up Actions

Both parties agreed that the next meeting is to be held in the US in early 2005.  
Meeting closed at 3pm 22 January 2004.